

# ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

BY  
VICENTE BLASCO IBAÑEZ

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ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED









KING ALFONSO XIII

# ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

THE MILITARY TERROR IN SPAIN

By  
VICENTE BLASCO IBAÑEZ

Author of  
"The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse"



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# MACHINE-GUN GOVERNMENT





# ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

## THE MILITARY TERROR IN SPAIN

### I

#### MACHINE-GUN GOVERNMENT

**S**PAIN is to-day a nation under the yoke. She cannot speak out ; she is gagged ; she cannot write ; her hands are bound. You may wonder why the Spanish people do not rush into the street to protest against this enforced slavery. Only a very natural instinct of self-preservation prevents them from doing so. The boot-heel that is crushing the Spanish nation is the boot-heel of the Army. Rifles and machine-guns can always reduce a defenceless crowd to silence.

For years I have kept out of politics at home. Long ago I gave up fighting for a cause which it seemed others could serve as

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well as I. Selfishly perhaps I indulged my liking for seclusion and the tranquillity that is so necessary to the writer.

But I cannot longer remain silent. The militarist forces of Spain believe themselves securely entrenched in the controlling positions of the country. I wish to prove to them that there is no more security for tyranny in Spain than anywhere else in the world. And though I have everything to lose and nothing to gain, in a material sense, by leading the assault on the reactionary forces of the Spanish monarchy, I have little by little been driven to the point where I can no longer calmly observe the conflict from a distance. It is not only my brothers' and my sons' and my father's blood that is being spilt. It is also the blood of Liberty !

I have referred to the Army. But, since the World War, that has become a misleading term. For now when we speak of armies we think of nations in arms, of the citizens of a country fighting for that country's life and ideals, of a united body of soldiers who,

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regardless of differences of opinion or of class, are fulfilling a primary duty and defending the things they believe to be good against the things they believe to be bad. But in Spain, to speak of the Army is to speak of a caste, a special class much like the one the first kings of Prussia tried to establish in the eighteenth century. Yes, military service is obligatory on all male citizens—provided, of course, you mean male citizens who are not officers. One can be an officer in the Spanish Army with very little “service.” Only those who go into the Army as a career may become officers. It is easy to see how in this way the nation at large is kept out of the councils of the military. It is even easier to observe to what an extent the Spanish Army officers look upon themselves as a special kind of being having nothing in common with the civilian population. The Spanish Army is, in short, not representative of the nation at large and is really a sort of prætorian guard in the service of the monarchy—as recent events have clearly shown.

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The Army absorbs a great part of the national resources. Its "heroic" achievements are officially celebrated with more pomp and ceremony than the triumphs of the greatest conquerors in history. But the same Army that knows so well how to celebrate an imaginary victory is invariably routed every time it engages in any military operation outside the country. Not that the Spanish soldier is lacking in courage. The Army's failures are due to its peculiar constitution. It is, I repeat, not the Spanish Army, but the King's Army—or, better still, the King's constabulary; and its principal victories have been won in city streets where its machine-guns have been trained on a peaceable populace with not even a penknife in its pockets.

For more than a year now Spain has been living in her corner of Europe like a woman locked up in a cell so thickly padded that it muffles her most piercing shrieks. The padding and the cell are a censorship of a kind that has seldom, if ever, been surpassed.



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Before being printed, newspaper copy must be approved by the censors of the military Directorate. To read a Spanish newspaper is simply to read the works of Primo de Rivera, an author somewhat given to exaggeration.

Even in the most reactionary periods of her history, Spain respected the rights of the book. In modern times censorship of books in Spain has been totally unknown. An author was always free to give expression to his views.

The Directorate, however, is not tender of traditions that do not serve its purposes. Yet even the Directorate did not venture to assail by direct attack freedom of expression in print. Under pretence of preventing the circulation in Spain of licentious books, such as do of course circulate in certain quarters, as in France and other countries, the Directorate ordered all printers, under pain of the most severe penalties, to refuse to deliver proofs to an author unless the latter could show a permit bearing the visa of the Directorate's generals or their henchmen.

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Obviously, if the intention had really been to prevent the circulation of licentious books, it would have been easy enough to proceed against one or two unscrupulous publishers and inflict heavy fines or a few prison sentences. But as a matter of fact one of the things the triumphant military caste in Spain is least interested in is preventing the circulation of obscene books.

As to protecting the rights of such authors as do not write obscene books, the present masters of Spain have had not a word to say. The scientist who writes a treatise on mathematics or astronomy must submit it to some Army officer in charge of censorship. But there is nothing to prevent the latter, if he is absorbed by more pressing duties, from postponing giving the authorisation without which the book cannot be published—which means that thought and thinking are in bondage and at the mercy of the censor's caprice. And such books as do not serve the interests of the Directorate may of course languish interminably in the pigeon-holes of the censorship office.

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Even in the stormy course of the nineteenth century not a country in Western Europe was ever placed in such a situation as that in which Spain is placed to-day. Russia alone, the Russia of the Tsars, in the most difficult moments of her history, might perhaps have offered such a spectacle to the world—illiterate braggarts uniformed as generals, making the whole country subservient to their whims and presuming even to put the mind of the nation in a strait-jacket!

The transformation Spain has undergone in this respect struck me with frightful impact when a few months ago I returned from a tour of the world. “Can this be Spain?” I wondered. The military tyrants had been working fast.

What was I to do? The tyranny inflicted by this tribe of uniform-wearers has its ludicrous aspects. Was I to laugh, shrug my shoulders, and retire once more to the pleasant security of my French villa?

Could I, I wondered, pipe rustic melodies in

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my peaceful solitude, and forget about the nation in distress, so near at hand, so near in every sense? But I have never been that kind of a writer. I have always believed that the man who writes must belong completely to his time and his country. Meanwhile, from thousands of my readers in Europe and America I was receiving letters urging me to speak, to reveal to the world the shameful state to which Spain has been reduced.

So often, after those sleepless nights, as I watched the sun rise on one of the loveliest scenes of the *Côte d'Azur*, I would feel a sharp twinge of remorse, as though I had committed an evil deed—I had said nothing!

Since my brother-Spaniards in Spain are not permitted to speak, I will speak for them and, come what may, I will speak the truth, the whole truth!

It would be easy enough to attack the Directorate generals. All my fellow-countrymen, without distinction of party, would end by approving the rôle I had assigned to myself; and when the Directorate falls, as it



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must do, sooner or later, and a constitutional government is once more established, I would then be able to go back to Spain with something of the feeling of a conqueror.

But those generals are nothing more than the "supers" of a rotten play, windbags allied to defeat in perpetuity. No, I shall speak the truth, without beating about the bush, and without mercy. It is time to make known who is the real cause of Spain's position to-day.

The old sea-dog admirals of the times of sailing-ships used to say to their gunners: "Don't aim at the masts! Aim at the hull!"

The masts in this case are the generals of the Directorate, comic opera generals, detective story generals. The hull is the King!

Yes, I, a Spaniard, for the sake of my country's honour, am aiming at Alfonso XIII, King of Spain.



A CHIP OF THE BOURBON BLOCK



## II

### THE KING—A CHIP OF THE BOURBON BLOCK

FOR a number of years the King of Spain has enjoyed considerable international popularity, as I am willing to concede. His youth, his free-and-easy manner of speaking, and the light-hearted daring that, in common with other young officers, he displayed, won him the sympathies and the liking of the crowd which saw him only from a distance and judged him only by appearances.

The kind of man we in Spain call “*simpatico*”—the “good fellow”—the man who is liked by his friends and acquaintances because he is “such a kid” may, in the wrong kind of situation for a “kid’s” capabilities, prove to be a very dangerous person. Chronic adolescence may be permissible in certain walks of life, but in the ruler it is distinctly out of place.

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The King of Spain is like the infant prodigies who attract attention early in life by their precocious development in some one direction.

But if that development is not rounded out, such "infants" frequently become unbearable as they grow older. What is worse, they may even become a menace to themselves and their friends. For the intelligence which flowered too soon dries up, or at least fails to develop further. The ex-prodigy cannot, however, believe that the brilliance once admired in him has ceased to exist. He still claims to know more than the common herd; and, hungering for the adulation he once received, conceives and carries out acts which indicate either a low grade of intelligence, or else a lack of mental balance.

Alfonso XIII is descended from the Spanish line of the Bourbons, and he has inherited many of the faults of his great-grandfather, Ferdinand VII, who, in his youth, was as much of a "good fellow" as his great-grandson. To gain some idea of how this sort of character affects the trend of history it is only



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necessary to reflect that the great Napoleon's downfall was due to Ferdinand's falsity, or foolishness, or both. What possessed Napoleon to undertake the disastrous Spanish campaign, historians have never ceased to wonder ; and Napoleon himself, in the solitude of St. Helena, marvelled at this "greatest mistake of his life." But even a genius as clear-sighted as Napoleon Bonaparte may be misled by a character like that of Ferdinand, a mixture of craftiness, treachery, acuteness, and complete irresponsibility, a nature as shifty as a quicksand. At the very moment when Ferdinand was of his own free will offering Napoleon the crown of Spain, and fairly going down on his knees to the Emperor to beg for the hand of Napoleon's niece in marriage, he was making the Spaniards believe that the French were holding him prisoner. It is easy enough to understand how Napoleon, judging the Spanish by the King they tolerated, thought he was dealing with a nation of demoralised cowards. If, to-day, one were to judge the Spanish people by their present

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ruler, one would be likely to make the same mistake.

Throughout his long and shameful career, Ferdinand VII, like the good-natured Charles II of England, "never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one." He, too, in his youth won popularity among his contemporaries by his quickness of speech and what passed for a ready wit. But after inducing Louis XVIII of France to send him "a hundred thousand of St. Louis' sons" to vanquish the Spanish Liberals and put him back on the throne as absolute sovereign, he celebrated the achievement by setting up the Inquisition once more and shooting a large number of the Liberals who had surrendered in the belief that the presence of the French Army guaranteed protection.

Toward his supporter, Ferdinand displayed not a whit more kindness nor loyalty. He made fun of friends and enemies indiscriminately. To his way of thinking there was room for only one person in Spain, the King. All the rest were nothing but a flock of sheep.

## A CHIP OF THE BOURBON BLOCK

He would stir up Absolutists against Liberals ; but if the Liberals chanced to gain the upper hand, he did not hesitate to incite them to massacre the very individuals he had himself urged to fight on his behalf.

Such Spaniards as were not taken in by Ferdinand's play-acting made fun of this Roman emperor with a Bourbon nose and pig's jowl. "*Narizotas*" they called him in allusion to the former, "Dough Face" in allusion to the latter, the "Blacks," or Liberals, being the inventors of the first nickname, and the "Whites," or the Absolutists, who could not stomach the King's treachery, calling him by the second. Yet, with inconceivable frivolity, Ferdinand would on occasion amuse himself in his palace by twanging the guitar and singing the words of the song that was to carry his nickname down through history :

"*Narizotas*, sour dough-face,

'Blacks' and 'Whites' are the same to him."

And in truth many a "White" and many a "Black" perished through the King's mach-

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inations. This was the likeable, the “*simpatico*” young fellow, who had been as popular in his youth as his great-grandson, Alfonso XIII. . . .

The resemblance, once it was pointed out, became, unhappily, more and more convincing. “He’s Ferdinand VII all over again,” some of his Cabinet Ministers began saying, after close association with their sovereign for a period of years. “Ferdinand VII? He’s Ferdinand Seven and a Half!” was the rejoinder of one of Spain’s leading reactionaries one day.

Other comparisons, scarcely more flattering to Alfonso, come to mind as one watches him. At times he has been dubbed “the Kaiser’s understudy.” Comically enough, the ex-Emperor and the young King hated one another cordially, perhaps because they both had such a passion for the theatrical. Each laid claim to the same rôle, each wanted the centre of the stage and all the limelight. Both of them seem animated by the same love of attention, the same love for taking a hand in every-

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thing, managing everything, making speeches about everything, and having the leading part in the most pompous scenes that ingenuity can devise or their positions render possible. And both have the same passion for disguising their real selves under picturesque trappings. At two o'clock in the afternoon Alfonso wears an admiral's uniform ; at three o'clock he must be dressed up as a Death's Head Hussar ; at four he appears in the regalia of the Lancers—and so on throughout many hours of the twenty-four. But military uniforms do not provide enough variety. The King has been known to ride out into the middle of the polo field dressed as a clown, and on occasion the costumes he has invented for himself have been so ludicrous that the illustrated papers of Madrid have been warned not to publish photographs of His Majesty. There are limits to what even a King may do with his dignity.

The hostility these two royal comedians felt for one another found expression in various incidents recorded in the private annals of their respective courts. William II has always

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obstinately refused to approve of certain cronies and counsellors of Alfonso's who cherished the project of annihilating the republic of Portugal and creating an Iberian empire—all for the laudable object of giving Ferdinand VII's great-grandson the opportunity to assume the airs of an emperor !

Alfonso expressed his resentment of this lack of sympathy for his imperial rôle much as a Madrid street *gamin* might have done. His pompous cousin, the German Emperor, had given orders that no hired vehicles were to enter the grounds of the Imperial Palace at Berlin, and Alfonso could think of no better joke to play every time he passed incognito through Berlin than to get into a hack at some street corner and drive to the palace. Out of regard for his royal person the palace guard had to disobey the Emperor's orders and admit him.

These "boyish" pranks, through which Alfonso's private animosity toward William found expression, would have been amusing enough if the War had not come along. But



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when it came, Ferdinand's great-grandson picked up something that looked very like his great grandfather's guitar and began in his turn humming the song of Bourbon selfishness which knows neither friends nor enemies.

The mother of Alfonso XIII was an Austrian, and although in his frolicsome youth he had behaved like a frisky schoolboy and refused to obey his mother's orders, the Queen-Mother had none the less in the course of time regained her influence over him. That influence actually represented a number of penniless Austrian archdukes who had flocked to the Spanish court, and the directors of several religious orders.

As skilful a comedian as the Ferdinand who deceived Napoleon, Louis XVIII, and his own most fervid partisans, Alfonso deceived the belligerents on both sides during four years, making each side believe that he would like to throw in his lot with it. But there is small doubt as to where his real sympathies lay !

Like his mother and her court, Alfonso

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XIII wanted the Central Powers to win. In spite of his personal dislike of the Kaiser, he admired William's policies and thoroughly approved his Absolutist ambitions. How much he must have sympathised with them is evident from his own recent destruction of constitutional government and his approval of the Military Dictatorship.

But Alfonso, who had never for a single moment ceased being the real master of Spain, chose to play the victim. His love of France, so he said, exposed him to frightful dangers. He was surrounded with enemies, he complained.

"France has not a single friend in Spain except me and the rabble," he is reported to have said. And there were not lacking fools on both sides of the frontier to applaud these cruelly ironic words. The "rabble"—that meant us, the writers, the teachers, the artists, in a word, the intellectuals of Spain, who from the very first hour of the War were in complete sympathy with the Allies!

But in the eyes of Ferdinand's descendant,

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the people of distinction in Spain were doubtless the ignorant and stupidly devout aristocracy, and the reactionary and savage rural population who persistently applauded all the German atrocities.

I do not know Alfonso personally. I have never asked to be presented to him. But for years I have been observing him with all the interest a novelist takes in a human document, and I know him perhaps better than those who have observed him from close-hand.

I never chose to meet Alfonso because I knew the day was coming when I should be forced to take sides against him, and to tell the truth. What torture it was, during those interminable years of war not to be able to speak out ! Not to be able to tell the Allies plainly in so many words what manner of man this was who called himself their only friend—with the “ rabble ” !

But of what use to make a scandal at such a time ? Besides, the men who were in control in France knew as well as I what sort of a “ friend ” they had in Alfonso XIII. If only

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they could publish certain notes and secret documents now securely locked away in their archives !

But the moment has come at last to speak of what the public has every right to know, and to cry out the truth, and assign now, in the living present, the place in history Alfonso XIII deserves.

As I have been at some pains to point out on other occasions, the Bourbons of Spain have always displayed a sort of diabolical skill in getting round all the obstacles in the way of imposing their will on the nation. They have always known how to dissimulate even their most lawless projects under an appearance of paternal good will. Ferdinand VII in his time was responsible for the shooting down of hundreds of Liberals, but the wholesale executions he ordered were always "for the good of the country." And the people, with the discrimination habitual to the populace at large, believed him and looked upon him as a father !

But Alfonso's love of wielding absolute

## A CHIP OF THE BOURBON BLOCK

authority has not destroyed his sense of prudence. He always likes to appear to be acting at the instigation of the people around him. In case of mishap he then has a scapegoat ready to hand, and while his pretended advisers are taking their punishment, he can pass himself off as completely innocent. It was this prudence that kept him from openly declaring his sympathy with the Central Powers during the War. Up to the very last minute he refused to believe that the Allies could win. But he preferred not to risk offending them. . . .





ALFONSO CHANGES HIS SPOTS



### III

#### ALFONSO CHANGES HIS SPOTS

**A**LFONSO needed to camouflage his German sympathies in order to carry on his activities in the German interests without compromise to himself. This is the particular pattern he designed for himself. He organised a bureau at the palace for the exchange of war prisoners. A few chairs and tables and a handful of secretaries and stenographers gave him all the setting he needed in order to pose as a humane and charitable monarch. The bureau did, in a small way, but with a great deal of self-advertising, what the Red Cross and some of the Swiss societies were doing very quietly on a very much larger scale. However, if the Spanish King had been satisfied with this activity he would be deserving of praise, though perhaps not quite entitled to the adula-

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tion his admirers have bestowed upon him. Thanks to his intervention, French, Belgian, German, and Austrian soldiers were enabled to get back to their respective countries.

But at the very time when, officially and publicly, he was engaging in this work for the prisoners, Alfonso was also engaging, far more energetically, and also far more quietly, in various enterprises organised to facilitate the operations of the German navy on the Spanish coast.

For three years, in the most cynically open manner and under the very nose of the Spanish navy, German submarines used our ports as supply bases. Some old and practically abandoned seaports near Tortosa, at the mouth of the Ebro, where only occasional fishing smacks put in, served the Germans as a safe refuge for their submarines. In Barcelona, Baron Rolland—a German, needless to say—attended industriously, and with really sublime impudence, to supplying these submarines with oil. The band of ruffians in his employ very effectively terrorised any persons

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who might attempt to denounce his activities, and one of the Spanish police commissioners, Bravo Portillo by name—he was later assassinated at Barcelona—actually placed at the Baron's disposal information supplied to him in his official capacity. Through this means the Baron frequently knew in advance when any of the ships of the Allies were leaving a Spanish port. Through his private wireless station, which was allowed to operate without the slightest interference from the Government, he kept the submarines informed as to the movements of French, English, Italian, and American craft.

Weighed in the scales, Alfonso's humane interest in exchanging a few French and English prisoners for German and Austrian prisoners of war does not balance very effectively against the terrible results of Spanish tolerance of the German submarine activities. Those were rare weeks in which no English or French merchant ships were torpedoed in Spanish waters in plain sight of shore. Even mail steamers on the way to Algeria, or home-

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ward bound from African ports, were not spared.

It is needless to point out that these ships were the victims primarily of the Allies' good faith in Spanish neutrality. That neutrality, they believed, would be maintained by King Alfonso. As ship after ship sought the supposed shelter of the Spanish coastal waters, it was perfidiously trapped. Meanwhile, German agents swarmed in the coast towns, and had their informants among the lower officials of the Spanish police.

It was not on one occasion only that the travellers in the Valencia-Barcelona express, which skirts the Mediterranean shore, saw from the train windows a German submarine attack an Allied ship which was sailing within the limits of Spanish territorial waters. Every week the gentle Mediterranean cast up hundreds of bodies and all manner of ghastly wreckage on its shores. Our beaches were strewn with shattered corpses that were sometimes carried by the resentful tide to the very doors of the summer cottages. Men



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from the crews of merchant vessels, women and children passengers from steamers to Algeria—those were the victims of the Allies' faith in Spanish neutrality.

During the same period it was made quite clear to the Spanish manufacturers who were selling supplies to the Allied armies that they did so at their peril. Barcelona was the centre of this manufacturing activity, turning out boots, shoes, material for uniforms, gun and rifle parts, etc. The Germans, with their usual terroristic methods, hired scoundrels to blow up factories where these supplies were being turned out, and to assassinate the factory-owners wherever possible. (All this sounds as though it had come out of a sensational novel—but it is historical fact !)

Not once did Alfonso XIII attempt to interfere in the war activities the Germans were carrying on in his kingdom, both by land and by sea. His phrases "I and the rabble" seems to have been acutely thought out in advance to give the impression that he was King in name only, that he had no

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real power, that everyone in Spain was making fun of him.

Alfonso's words were untrue. He has always been able to do whatever he wanted to in Spain. Quite recently it suited his purposes to destroy the constitution and restore an absolute monarchy. When he assembled his courtier generals around him on the day when the Directorate was declared, he knew exactly what he was doing.

Had he really wished to intervene in favour of the Allies, or simply to keep within the limits of armed neutrality, he could have done so in 1914, without encountering any opposition, and even with the general approbation of his subjects. He had not at that time begun dabbling in those terrible military undertakings in Morocco that were later to become his obsession. He was still, in those days, looked upon as a scatter-brained but likeable youth; he still enjoyed a certain prestige. Had he, therefore, chosen to express his sympathy with the Allied cause, he would have encountered not the slightest difficulty in

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doing so. But he chose rather to let the Germans do whatever they pleased in Spain, knowing perfectly well, as he did, the nature of the activities they were carrying on. Worse still, he even prevented his Ministers from making any attempt to put an end to the insolence of the Germans in this supposedly neutral country.

In 1918 a coalition Ministry was formed in Spain, comprising the leading personalities of the various political parties. Señor Dato, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was directed by his colleagues to send the Berlin Government a note protesting against the presence in Spanish ports of German submarines, and against the frequent sinking in Spanish territorial waters of ships flying the Spanish flag. This note unmasked the King in such fashion as to make more than one of his Cabinet Ministers gasp with amazement at the duplicity revealed.

The Spanish Ambassador to Berlin at the time was a certain Polo de Bernabe, a great admirer of the Kaiser, who took enormous

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satisfaction in the fact that both he and his wife were received informally at the palace by the German rulers. Bernabe calmly determined, therefore, not to present the note transmitted to him by his Government. The Prime Minister, indignant at the Ambassador's failure to carry out instructions, again ordered him to present the note. Whereupon the Ambassador made one of the most extraordinary replies yet recorded in the history of diplomacy.

"The note is too sharp. I don't want to give it to the Kaiser. It would hurt his feelings, and he's such a fine man!"

The King's Ministers had suspected from the first that Alfonso must have a hand in this situation—the Ambassador's attitude would otherwise have been unexplainable—and prepared an order discharging him from his post because of failure to carry out the commands of his superiors.

The order was presented to the King for his signature.

Alfonso refused to sign it. And the reply

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he made sounded singularly like that of his Ambassador.

“ I value the services of my representative at Berlin, and I don't want to hurt his feelings by signing his discharge.”

The King was at that time a constitutional monarch, but it is evident that he looked upon his Ambassadors and Ministers as the representatives, not of the Spanish nation, but of himself. He gave them his orders directly, over the heads of the Ministers responsible for the diplomatic functions of the Government. He dealt with his generals in the same fashion, giving them instructions without troubling to consult the Minister of War, though the constitution required that he should consult them.

The following incident is perhaps the most illuminating of the many incidents one might recount to reveal the nature of Alfonso's activities and preoccupations during the years when even the most frivolous person might have been sobered by the nature of the struggle going on before his eyes. Alfonso XIII wanted

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to be considered an authority on military matters, and often discussed the progress of the War with the military attaché of the French embassy in Madrid. He carried on conversations of the same nature with the military attaché of the German Embassy as well. One day the French discovered the key to the cipher that the German Embassy at Madrid used for sending its wireless messages to Berlin. (Let me note in passing that it was thanks to the discovery of the key to this cipher code that the French learned of the activities of the dancer, Mata-Hari, a spy in the employ of the Germans, who was then tried and shot at Paris.)

The French soon noticed that the German attaché at Madrid was transmitting to his home Government a great deal of information of an extremely confidential nature—the information communicated to Alfonso by the French attaché. In order to make certain that their suspicions were justified, the French attaché fed Alfonso with some manufactured “information.” A few hours later the Ger-



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man embassy at Madrid was transmitting this manufactured news to Berlin! Needless to say, the French stopped taking Alfonso into their confidence.

Now I am not accusing Alfonso of wittingly playing the spy and intentionally betraying the nation he declared was his "friend." He would not do that. But the incident reveals an appalling thoughtlessness at least, and a tendency to treat affairs of state as lightly as the gossip of the gaming table.

While the King was protesting sympathy for the Allies, and while scoundrels in the employ of German agents were doing all in their power to terrorise—though with little success, be it said—all private persons who ventured to take the King seriously and aid the Allied cause—we Spaniards were treated one morning to a somewhat astonishing spectacle. This was nothing less than the setting up by the Germans, at a short distance from the port of Valencia, of some curious rafts, which, it was explained, were instruments designed to test the force of the waves,



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these tests being preliminary to devising some means of using this force as a source of power. It seemed odd, however, that the only place where these German scientists could study this particular subject was in the gulf of Valencia, half-way between Marseilles and Algiers. And it was also curious that this particular subject of investigation should require such a dashing and splashing of motor-boats around the rafts at all hours. Needless to say these rafts were simply oil containers from which the submarines were supplied, the motor-boats acting as carriers.

The numerous protests made against this kind of "scientific research" were so many voices crying in the wilderness. Why should anyone listen to such protests in a country now fully convinced of its King's German sympathies? Had he made a single gesture, to which we could attach serious significance, to indicate real friendliness toward the French? On the other hand, how many gestures of his indicated his complicity with the Germans!

## ALFONSO CHANGES HIS SPOTS

No ; Alfonso XIII's real " friendliness " towards France, like that of Primo de Rivera, dates from 1918—from the moment when it became apparent that the victory of the Allies was inevitable and imminent !

During the first years of the War a dozen or so of my Spanish friends and I were quite alone, of all our countrymen, in championing the splendid cause of the Allies. When, in 1915, I returned to Spain for the first time since the outbreak of the War, I barely escaped assassination in Barcelona at the hands of some gunmen who were " working " for the Germans. With somewhat suspicious solicitude, the Spanish Government thereupon " invited " me to leave my native land at once. It was known that I had returned to urge by every means in my power that Spain should keep strictly to her declared neutrality. Yes ; when I hear that Alfonso XIII and Primo de Rivera have again been referring to themselves as " friends of France," I have to smile. . . .

Where Primo de Rivera's sympathies lay during the first years of War, I don't know.

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He committed himself by neither word nor gesture. If, as he now affirms, he was a French sympathiser, it can only have been at the very last moment. . . .

Yet, by failing to declare themselves at the very beginning of the War, Primo de Rivera and the other Spanish generals really lost a fine opportunity to render a genuine service to the officers of the Spanish Army, who were waiting for someone to formulate their opinions in this unforeseen eventuality. I have at hand some of the comments on the Battle of the Marne made by a few of our thousands and thousands of generals who, if they are not to-day actually part of the Directorate, must at least be living in its shadow. If only the great Flaubert were alive, what a contribution these clippings and notes would make to the work to which he devoted the last years of his life—the *Encyclopædia of Human Folly*!

ALFONSO'S FRIENDS



## IV

### ALFONSO'S FRIENDS

SO long as the King of Spain was young, he asked no more of the opportunities his kingship threw in his way than to be allowed to drive his motor cars at breakneck speed, to shoot all the pigeons he wanted to in his zealous endeavours to become a crack shot, to play polo, etc., etc. He felt that it behoved him, as King of a famous nation, to excel in all sports, and excel he did—according to his courtiers! Alfonso was trained to be a King; that is to say, his mother and tutors taught him to demand of life all its material pleasures, and everything tending to satisfy his vanity. (Not such an extraordinary attitude, of course, and to be found among a great many people who are not kings.) Naturally, the flattery of his court led him to have an extravagant confidence in his own powers, untested and untrained as they were, and to

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

believe that in whatever he undertook he could not help surpassing the efforts of other human beings. Alfonso XIII was not satisfied with being King of Spain, simply. He had to be Spain's best soldier, best sailor, most scientific agriculturist, and so on—and so he is. In everything he holds first place! He has not yet painted pictures and written librettos, like his hated model, William of the Withered Arm, but, given time, he will doubtless find an opportunity to turn his attention to these activities also!

There was a time when this likeable young man, was content to enliven the banquet he attended by telling funny stories and cracking harmless jokes. Suddenly, he took it upon himself to become an orator, and now he makes nearly as many speeches as Primo de Rivera. To see King Alfonso leap intrepidly into an oration is like watching a diver plunge into a stormy sea running high with waves too strong for his arms, so that he is hurled about at the mercy of the force to which he recklessly



## ALFONSO'S FRIENDS

entrusted himself. The figure is not exaggerated. Alfonso does not control his words. They take possession of him and throw him about, into attitudes now grotesque, now pitiful. Almost invariably he says things he might better keep to himself; and sometimes his indiscretions assume extraordinary dimensions, as, for instance, in his speech at Cordoba, and at the Vatican, which I shall go into more at length later on.

The fatal effect of Alfonso's solemn assumption of the rôle of orator was this—he soon came to look upon himself as a statesman! After having heard himself discoursing on affairs of state, this engaging young man, whose abilities would in no wise have been extraordinary in a second-lieutenant, concluded that in all Spain there was no one so well able to manage the nation's business as himself. But it was Spain's misfortune, so this enthusiastic young polo player reasoned, that, having such an able monarch as himself, she could not give him a free hand to exercise his abilities. The constitution was in the way.

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

Of course, England, Italy and other European countries were equally unfortunate, but in their respective cases the discrepancy between the ruler's abilities and his opportunities to exercise them without ridiculous limitations was not so flagrant ! If he only had a chance to govern alone, like his great-grandfather, Ferdinand VII, why then everyone would see what he would do for Spain ! An era of unexampled grandeur and prosperity would at once be ushered in—and, of course, one of the principal agencies for accomplishing the miracle was the Army. The Army should be the King's Army, naturally, not the nation's.

How incessantly Alfonso has repeated the refrain, " I, a soldier," " we soldiers " ! He repeated the formula one day in the midst of a Cabinet meeting. " But Your Majesty is not a soldier. Your Majesty is a King ! " one of his Ministers remonstrated, " and a King should hold himself aloof from both the civil and the military groups of the nation, so that in case of conflict between them he can maintain impartiality." Alba, the Minister in

## ALFONSO'S FRIENDS

question, has from that day to this been extremely unpopular with Alfonso's courtiers, and is thoroughly detested by the generals.

This soldier, however, who is so fertile in plans for his generals on the African battle-front—plans which always result in costly defeats and frightful losses among our soldiers—is a soldier in name and uniform only, and never to be found near the fighting-line. It should be added, however, that the King's generals as well as his courtiers, urge him to keep at a distance from the field of action, and their motive is not simply loyal interest in their sovereign's safety. His vanity, his propensity to consider himself infallible, his desire to manage everything, would perhaps make him far more dangerous on the battlefield than the enemy.

“How is it,” I inquired one day of one of Alfonso's friends—with somewhat ironical intention, I admit—“how is it that in all these years since the War has been going on in Morocco the first soldier of Spain has never visited the scene of the battle?”

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

“God forbid!” the courtier exclaimed. “He’d make a fine mess of everything, and we’d have an even worse time of it than we are having now!”

Unfortunately, the deputies and peers of Spain have not been so successful in keeping the King away from the seat of government, and Alfonso has realised his ambition to rule without a constitution and without the collaboration of his Ministers.

Alfonso XIII looks upon himself as a poor man. The yearly income the government pays him reaches a very respectable figure, and is certainly much higher than the financial condition of Spain justifies. But it does not suffice to cover the expenses entailed by the King’s requirements and the constantly increasing expenditures of his family.

While the Queen-Regent was in control of affairs she was able to amass an enormous fortune—legitimately, let me add, since she accumulated it by perseveringly laying aside the millions she received from the nation. The Queen-Mother maintained a very modest

## ALFONSO'S FRIENDS

court during Alfonso's minority and insisted upon a régime of strict economy in the palace, carefully reducing expenses, as any good housekeeper might do. Her sole preoccupation was to prevent the fall of the monarchy after the disasters of Cuba and the Philippines, and to rear her son. To this child, begotten of a sickly father during the last weeks of his life, she devoted all her care, for it seemed improbable that the boy would ever live to reach manhood.

The Queen-Mother was haunted by other fears, all depending, however, on the principal fear she suffered from, that of losing her son. She lived in constant terror of seeing her family driven off the throne. But she believed that the ruling house of Austria would last for ever. She therefore entrusted all her millions to an uncle, one of the Austrian Archdukes, who, like any good trustee, made his niece's savings increase and multiply. Unfortunately, when he died a few years ago, it was found that he had not made clear in his will what part of the fortune he left belonged

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

to his niece, Doña Cristina, who has had some difficulty in recovering the wealth she had amassed by her prudence and economy. The Archduke's heirs refused to give it back to her. A settlement was finally arrived at, but only because the Queen-Mother saw no other way out of her dilemma than to accept a fractional part of the sum to which she really was entitled. Alfonso, the "Modern King," as he calls himself, has small hopes, therefore, of inheriting anything to speak of from his mother. He is obsessed accordingly with the desire to make money. He spends a great deal more than his yearly income allows, and, moreover, is not absolutely certain of always being the King of Spain. He therefore has recourse to business enterprises of one kind or another in the hope of winning a fortune by some stroke of luck. As a result, the prestige of the Spanish monarchy has suffered some severe shocks, for with his usual lack of ponderation he engages in all sorts of enterprises proposed to him. However, his part in these ventures consists of lending



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the glamour of his name. He does not risk his capital in them.

The Press has had occasion now and then to mention the King's business connections. One in particular was that with the Hispano-Suiza Automobile Company of Barcelona. He invested in this company, but his stock is held in the name of one of his courtiers. Alfonso's name has also been mentioned in connection with the Transmediterranean Navigation Company of Madrid, which obtained a concession to which it was not rightfully entitled, as the concession in question had previously been given to another company. The King, however, arranged the matter according to his own views and without regard to the usual precedent in such matters.

Among the King's intimates is a Belgian, Marquet by name, whose chief claim to consideration is the fact that he is the owner of the *roulette* and *trente-et-quarante* tables at San Sebastian. But Alfonso has always cherished the ambition of becoming the friend of some American multi-millionaire. Whenever the



## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

yacht of some one of the well-known American financiers arrives in the harbour of San Sebastian or Santander, the Spanish King displays greater admiration and deference for the visitor than he would if the Pope himself were to arrive in the harbour.

In the case of the Belgian intimate I have mentioned, there was some reason to believe a few years ago that Alfonso intended to give him a title, and make his friend a baron, "Baron Lucky Number" it was affirmed. "Baron Rouge et Noir" said others. But the Belgian comments on the affair were of such a nature that the King and his protégé dropped the project.

The Casino at San Sebastian is open only in summer. Monsieur Marquet, thinking enviously of the Monte Carlo Casino, which is open all the year round, determined to find a way of exploiting the King's compatriots in the winter time as well, and opened an "Ice Palace" in the heart of Madrid. Here one may skate on the first floor, and engage in gambling and other diversions. The Spanish

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rulers lent the glamour of their presence to the opening of this enterprise sprung up like a mushroom in the midst of their capital. M. Marquet had the honour of receiving the Queen and conducting her on his arm through the various apartments of his "palace."

Quite recently Alfonso bought himself a stud of horses and now gives a great deal of time to racing them, especially at the San Sebastian track. It is whispered in aristocratic circles that the King cannot afford to keep up this luxury and that the horses really belong to Monsieur Marquet. "Ruban" is the best horse of the stud, and whenever he runs at San Sebastian, he always wins.

But, after all, that only proves that, like his master, he is Spanish, and runs better at home where the ground is suited to his movements!

Another of Alfonso's intimates is the Monsieur Cornuchet, who three years ago arranged Alfonso's trip to Deauville, making it as spectacular as the last act of a musical revue. At the time the most recent disaster suffered

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by the Spanish troops in Africa was still fresh in the minds of all Alfonso's subjects. This particular calamity quite surpassed anything of like nature recorded in the entire annals of our colonial wars. Only the defeat of the Italian General Barattieri, in Abyssinia, can be compared with it. Fifteen hundred Spaniards were taken prisoners by the Moroccans, a fate compared with which death is a happy release.

It was in the midst of the national distress and humiliation occasioned by this event that Alfonso took his little holiday in Deauville.

Whether Alfonso can have had any conception of the frivolity of his conduct at the time I seriously question. The way he behaved on this occasion of national mourning is quite in keeping with his general character. Foreign comment on this episode was generally unfavourable, and the topical songs the affair inspired in Montmartre were such as to necessitate the intervention of the Spanish Ambassador in Paris.

## ALFONSO'S FRIENDS

Alfonso, however, enjoyed his visit to Monsieur Cornuchet and planned to pay him another at Cannes the following year. The pretext for this proposed trip to France was to visit the dethroned Italian Bourbons or the Counts of Caserta, who live in retirement at Cannes where Monsieur Cornuchet has another Casino. The latter at once began preparations designed to provide the royal visitor with every comfort and luxury. Of course, the presence of the Spanish monarch at the gaming tables of the Cannes Casino would bring this resort into competition even with Monte Carlo !

But in Spain there was a distinctly unfavourable reaction when the King's plans were announced, the upper classes expressing their disapproval far more forcibly even than the masses for whom Cannes and Deauville were mere names. In the Chamber of Deputies the Opposition made such allusions to the holiday planned by Alfonso and Monsieur Cornuchet that His Majesty had to give up his intended visit.

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

Perhaps he, too, complained, like his grandmother, the sentimental Isabella II, when, in her old age, her last secretary was torn from her :

“ What a horrid task it is to be royalty !  
There’s always somebody interfering with  
your pleasure ! ”

## ALFONSO'S WAR





## V

### ALFONSO'S WAR

A FEW years ago Alfonso made the acquaintance of a person who was, he thought, the very man he needed to help him to get rich. Pedraza was a Spaniard who had knocked about a great deal in the United States and South America, engaging in enterprises of one kind or another. He was an active, intelligent sort of fellow who might justly be described as belonging to the business adventurer type, and he became Alfonso's intimate and financial adviser.

The King is easily impressed, and as Pedraza talked exuberantly about his friends the multimillionaires of Wall Street and the City, Alfonso took him for a sort of Morgan or Rockefeller who would be able to make him rich in a few months' time.

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Pedraza's financial schemes were usually of the type not supported by conservative financial purists. One consequence of carrying them out would have been to flood several of the world's capitals with the paper representing stock in Señor Pedraza's company, which had the support, it was supposed, of a group of English and American financiers. These gentlemen, according to Pedraza, stood ready to direct a stream of capital into Spain for investment in one enterprise or another. To live up to his part in this magnificent development programme, Pedraza promised that he would have a railway put through direct from Madrid to Valencia, and another from the frontier to Algeciras. But at this point the Spanish bankers protested against a scheme which amounted to nothing less than taking possession of Spain's finances. Pedraza's royal partner was, it seemed, on the point of placing Spain under foreign business control in perhaps the hope of "cleaning up" a few millions for himself at one stroke!

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Fortunately, the Minister of Finance at the time was honest, and able enough to defeat this project, and Pedraza and his capitalists had to retire.

This rather humiliating fiasco of the King's plans marks a crisis in his career. After Pedraza's defeat, Alfonso had but one idea—to govern without the restrictions of the constitution, to be “sole master,” as he said in so many words a few days after the triumph of the Directorate.

The King's process of reasoning at this juncture is easy enough to follow. Alfonso looked upon himself as “poor” because he couldn't spend the enormous sums he wanted to spend; as a constitutional monarch he had no other resources than the income allowed him by Parliamentary decree. He wanted, however, to be an absolute ruler, he had had enough of being accountable to his Ministers for what he spent, and he thought enviously of those rulers who in the past had been able to treat the nation's wealth as their own. That revolutions have always

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

followed this looting of a country's resources by its kings he did not stop to consider.

Besides, he was still smarting from the humiliation of having been interrupted in his latest money-making project by his Ministers—again the fault of that miserable constitution!

And here, lest it be thought that I am merely “interpreting” the King's character, and none too favourably, let me continue the Pedraza story, to bear out my explanation of Alfonso's *coup d'état*.

No sooner was the constitution suppressed, and Spain reduced to a condition of slavery through military Directorate, than Alfonso at once took up the project his Ministers had forced him to drop. Pedraza was abroad, but his royal associate at once sent him a telegram: “Come quick, everything ready. Alfonso R.”

Pedraza made good use of the telegram, showing it to business men and financiers in England and other countries in order to gain support for his scheme.

## ALFONSO'S WAR

But, as it happened, that scheme was destined to meet with no more favour on the part of the Directorate generals than it had met with among the constitutional Cabinet Ministers. It was not principle that inspired the generals to oppose the King, but policy. The Directorate has from the first sought the support of the Party of the Right. It is in mortal fear of arousing the antagonism of bankers and capitalists. Alfonso, however, had another reason for resolving upon the *coup d'état*. The war in Morocco. . . .

For Alfonso XIII, Spain is nothing but a boxful of tin soldiers. This perpetual young man has always aspired to playing an important rôle among the monarchs of Europe. That is why, at the Algeciras conference, he accepted the Protectorate of the Rif—that is to say, a country belonging supposedly to Morocco but over which the Sultans of Morocco have never been able, in spite of centuries of warfare, to establish their authority.

This is the bone that was offered our poor Spain at the diplomatic banquet at Algeciras !

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

Needless to say it was a gift nobody else wanted. Alfonso XIII accepted it joyfully, however. Here was an opportunity to show he, too, was a "war lord"! And straightway he entered upon that most incomprehensible and senseless struggle of all history—the Spanish-Moroccan war.

For fourteen years now Spain has been maintaining in Africa the largest body of soldiers that has ever been kept under arms on that continent. It consists of more than a hundred thousand men. Sometimes the numbers run as high as a hundred and twenty thousand, and over. The mountaineers of the Rif who are fighting this Spanish Army number eight to ten thousand, and are not abundantly supplied with munitions. Nevertheless, the Spanish Army has never won a single important victory, and again and again it has been put to rout.

Yet to make these singular facts still more inexplicable, the Spaniard is a brave soldier. Some French officers whose opinion I value and who have watched this warfare at close-



## ALFONSO'S WAR

hand, are agreed upon one point at least, namely, that the Spanish officer fights with the courage of a man who has definitely made the gift of his life to his country. As to the soldier in the ranks, he fights with simple resignation. He can scarcely feel any enthusiasm for a war that means nothing to him. Just the same, he does his duty as he sees it, goes forward at his superior's orders, and gets himself killed. Yet, in spite of the courage displayed by officers and men, the Spanish Army has experienced an interminable and costly series of defeats. In other words, this Army cannot overcome the insuperable disadvantage of being conscious that it represents a dynasty, not a nation, and that it is fighting, not to realise national aspirations, but so that the King may cut the figure of a great warrior on the Moroccan stage, and because his friends and favourites hope to lay their hands on the Rif mines, about which there are many highly-coloured stories current, but very little real information. (This, however, has only made it easier for



## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

Abd-el-Krim, the leader of the Riffians, to negotiate for the sale of these mines with business men from all parts of the globe.)

Only one fact need be known, however, to explain the constant defeats Spain has had to experience in Morocco. The Army's operations are directed by Alfonso XIII in Madrid ! What else could one expect of "Spain's greatest soldier" who had the good fortune to be born with a complete knowledge of all things ?

I have already referred to one overwhelming catastrophe experienced by our troops. It was surpassed by the disaster of Annural, for which the King was directly responsible, as he had outlined the plan of operations with General Silvester, a brave soldier, and an excellent cavalry officer, but of mediocre ability so far as strategy was concerned, and absolutely at the mercy of the wisdom of a superior. Allowing for a difference in scale, one might compare him to Murat or Lassalle.

The Napoleon of the occasion was the

## ALFONSO'S WAR .

Spanish King, who, without a word of consultation with the Minister of War, had arranged the plan of procedure—a rapid, overwhelming attack, to open up the road to the Rif and bring the whole region into Spanish control—all, of course, thanks to the remarkable generalship of the Spanish King!

At a banquet at Valladolid, where the general had been summoned by His Majesty, Silvester and his King touched glasses and drank to the success of their venture.

“ On the 25th of July, I expect good news of you,” said the King. And then the general returned to Africa and began operations.

So well did both the King and his general keep the secret of their plans that the Commander-General of Morocco received the news of General Silvester's defeat and death at precisely the same moment he was informed of Silvester's advance on the enemy.

Among the dead general's effects was found a telegram from his sovereign couched in the language of the bull-fight.

“ *Ole, hombres, I'm waiting!* ”

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

Ten thousand Spaniards perished with the unfortunate general, and the enemy picked up an enormous amount of munitions and other war supplies on the field. So, to put this unpleasant incident out of his mind, Alfonso went to pay his friend a visit at Deauville.

Like many people who cannot endure wounds to their vanity because they have already suffered so many, Alfonso put the blame for the failure of his plans on those who were supposed to carry them out. In Spain one of the symbols for cowardice is a hen. When the Arabs of the Rif added insult to injury by demanding of us five million pesetas as ransom for our soldiers captured at Annural, Alfonso thought the occasion worthy of one of those boyish witticisms that come easily from his lips :

“ *Dios*, what a high price to pay for poultry ! ”

The Annural disaster was too bitter a pill for Spain to swallow, however. For the first time in years, Parliament showed some signs

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of energy and independence. The Chamber of Deputies appointed a commission consisting both of men favourable to the monarchy and republican sympathisers to investigate the affairs of the Army and a number of the Spanish generals were summoned before a court of inquiry.

For the first time in the history of Spain-Army officers were called before civil judges and required to testify, either as witnesses or as persons who might later be placed under arrest.

Meanwhile other documents besides the King's "*Ole hombres*" telegram had fallen into the hands of the investigating commission, among them a letter to the unhappy General Silvester, in which was the following :

"Do what I tell you and pay no attention to the Minister of War. He's an ass !"

For some time afterwards the Minister of War was at some pains to avoid meeting the sovereign who had thus described him.

By the time the Committee of Twenty-one had completed their investigation there could

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

no longer be any doubt as to the King's guilt in so far as the Moroccan tragedies were concerned. . . .

The King watched the proceedings of the Committee with great uneasiness. It was going to make public matters he preferred to keep private—his meddling in the conduct of the war, his disregard of the constitution, the arbitrary nature of some of his acts. . . .

There would be a tremendous scandal . . . a scandal which must be smothered at the outset. The *coup d'état* which the Army had been hatching for a long time must be hurried up. It must be sprung at once to save the King's prestige! Hence the uprising which established the Directorate in Spain. . . .

As soon as Alfonso knew that the Committee of Twenty-one had completed its investigations and that a date had been set for making their findings public, he encouraged Primo de Rivera to hasten the revolt of Catalonia which was to be the excuse for abolishing the constitution and establishing the Directorate.

## ALFONSO'S WAR

No sooner had Primo de Rivera sprung the uprising of the 13th of September, 1923, on his country—the fact that he was working at the King's behest gave him, of course, complete security—than one of the officers high in command in the Spanish Army walked into the Chamber of Deputies, followed by a numerous escort.

The record of the investigation by the Committee of Twenty-one as to the responsibility for the disaster of Annural was kept in one of the adjoining rooms. The Directorate's emissary promptly took possession of it, and from that day to this no one has been able to find trace of those important documents. No doubt they have been destroyed. But the men who served on that Committee are still alive, and a good many of them have in their possession notes they made on the testimony submitted to them and the documents that passed through their hands. . . .





## ALFONSO'S AMBITIONS



## VI

### ALFONSO'S AMBITIONS

FOR the last fifty years the Spanish monarchy has had but one serious pre-occupation—to flatter the Army. Once the rulers of Spain succeeded in getting the fighting forces of the country under control they need worry no more about anything else—so, at least, they believed. All they would have to do then to put a stop to any protest would be to turn on the machine-guns. And they would be able to have all the things they wanted, without a lot of unnecessary trouble and anxiety. . . .

As to the rest of the nation the Spanish sovereigns cared not a whit. The peculiar relations existing between the monarchy and the Spanish people can best be described by saying that the Bourbons have always treated their subjects as though they thought them a

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

kind of steam engine that made itself thoroughly objectionable by revolving its wheels and making a great deal of noise.

The Bourbons preferred silence, the silence of the void, and devoted all the energy they possessed to destroying their steam engine. They slammed beams down on the pistons to shut off the steam and they poured water into first one part and then another, until the whole engine rusted and finally became incapable of running at all. Bit by bit its gear was broken, until now it is a complete wreck.

Yes, Spaniard as I am, I must confess to my shame and sorrow that Spain is the most disorganised country in the world. Her richest and most industrious provinces—Catalonia, for instance, and the Basque region—show a disposition to separate from her. The life throbbing within them is their own life, and they want to be detached from an organism they look upon as rotten to the core. But the worst trouble is this, that within half a century Spain, once the impassioned champion

## ALFONSO'S AMBITIONS

of ideas—ideas sometimes false, it is true, but always generous—has been transformed by its rulers into a nation of materialists, into a country of no moral elevation whatsoever !

Twenty-five years ago there were two Spains living side by side, the Spain of tradition, and the Spain of liberalism, the one enamoured of past glories, the other eager in the pursuit of the most daring innovations. But each had its ideal and stood ready to give up its life for this ideal.

Alfonso and his mother made Spain a country of materialists who have no thought other than to enjoy every pleasure, or everything that passes for pleasure, in the estimation of the mob. It believes in nothing, hopes for nothing, and accepts any base and hastily devised compromise simply because it lacks the energy necessary to face risks and dangers, as it would have to do to regain its liberty.

Thanks to the Bourbon monarchy, the country once Don Quixote's has become the country of the boot-licking, gluttonous, and cowardly Sancho Panza, who is incapable of

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

conceiving of an idea higher than the rim of his trough.

The well-to-do classes in Spain display that worst of all cruelties, the cruelty that is born of fear. They do not dare move or change their attitude even when they know that such a change might be useful to their country. Brutally they proclaim their trust in the club and the whip, and are always to be found approving of those solutions of social problems which begin and end with shooting.

The working classes, on the other hand, betray a taste for bloodshed far more marked than in any other country. Every time the workers in Spain have expressed their wants, they have been answered by a hail of bullets. The Spanish workman could not hope to fight soldiers equipped with all the tools of death, and so he has had recourse to crimes of violence. As a result, the class war, which is taking place in other countries in a more or less attenuated form, in Spain, thanks to the good offices of the monarchy, assumes the characteristics of the most savage warfare.

## ALFONSO'S AMBITIONS

For fifty years the rulers of Spain have not established a single school, nor have they paid any attention whatsoever to the intellectual development of the nation. On the contrary, they praise Spain's most barbarous traditions to her face. The faults that have marked and marred the Spanish character for centuries are always referred to by the Spanish sovereigns as our "magnificent national heritage." Ferdinand VII, Isabella II, Alfonso XII, and his son Alfonso XIII, all adopted the speech and the gestures of the bull-fighters and ragamuffins of Madrid, in the belief that there was something essentially Spanish in the manners of this riff-raff. But the Spaniards who give evidence of possessing a culture more or less resembling that of other nations are looked upon as lovers of foreign things, totally lacking in patriotism, traitors to Spanish traditions.

In such a country the English queen is, figuratively and morally speaking, more or less a prisoner. During the War, in the course of which one of her brothers, an



## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

English officer, was killed, she resigned herself to living in isolation in a court where everyone, her husband included, was a German sympathiser. How this English princess feels now that the constitution has been torn up like a scrap of paper, and a military tyranny rivalling that of the former Tsars inflicted on the country of her adoption, it would be hard to describe.

But to return to Alfonso; thanks to the régime he himself had instituted, his situation became unendurable. On the one hand, he was threatened by separatism, on the other, by social revolution. More alarming still was the absolute lack of government in the country, due to the King's manœuvrings to prevent anyone besides himself from having power or responsibility. His intrigues did not necessarily accomplish the result they were designed to bring about, but they did obstruct whatever governing agencies there were.

In the days of Alfonso XII and the Queen-Regent there were only two parties in Spain, the Liberals, led by Canovas, and the Con-

## ALFONSO'S AMBITIONS

servatives, under the leadership of Sagasta. Each of these parties took its turn at ruling, and it was funny enough to see the Spanish Government alternately labelled " Liberal " or " Conservative " according to the policies of the Minister who was taking his turn at the wheel. However, as there were only two men in the game, they inspired a certain respect in the sovereign they served, and even, when they worked together, succeeded in imposing their will on the royal family and the court.

Inspired by his desire to be the absolute master of Spain and to destroy the constitutional régime, Alfonso XIII did not rest until he had broken up the two opposing parties. By a long series of intrigues, he incited subordinates to work against their superiors, he rewarded traitors, and made the dissatisfied members of each party leaders of other groups which he promised to put in power. And by thus acting on the Jesuit maxim, " Divide and rule," he succeeded in making a dozen new parties out of the two original ones.

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The result of this policy of division is that, for years, no one party has had sufficient strength to remain in power. The Cabinets that have followed one another in long succession have had only one thought in mind—to defend themselves against their enemies. Their entire attention has been given to maintaining themselves in office, and, to succeed in this object, they have lent themselves to suggestions emanating from Alfonso.

A country morally corrupted by its rulers, torn by separatist movements, ill-governed by Ministers who can think of nothing but ensuring their jobs, is well on the way to destruction. The Spanish monarchy is the victim of its own acts. Frightened by social disorder, it sought a cure for the disturbances around it in a military dictatorship which was at the same time favourable to its autocratic aspirations. And so we see the monarchy in the first place inducing the national sickness, and then pretending to cure it by the brutal application of militarism.

The corrupting influence of the Bourbons

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on the Spanish nation has been equally fatal with respect to the Army. In the course of the nineteenth century the Spanish Army has frequently intervened in political events, sometimes for liberal, sometimes for reactionary purposes. But even while it was thus intruding on the civil administration of the nation, the Army gave evidence of being animated by its ideals. Whether this idealism sought expression in a liberal or a reactionary programme mattered little. It was none the less a hopeful sign for the nation.

But Alfonso XIII and his mother before him destroyed the earlier spirit of the Army, by making of the nation's fighting force a corporation of petty business men, whose sole thought was to get as much profit as they could out of their profession.

The military "juntas" established in Spain during 1919 were nothing more than Soviets, but Soviets of men in uniform, and admitting no one except the military to membership, from second-lieutenants to colonels. These caste Soviets in inverted Russian style be-

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trayed all the appetites of a social class which has suddenly become conscious of its importance and wishes to exploit its opportunities.

We have already said that the monarchy was determined to flatter the Army and shape it to its own likeness so as to be sure of its support. As soon as the Army discovered it was indispensable to the rulers, it demanded, through its juntas, increased pay and extravagant privileges, and finally succeeded in establishing in the very heart of the nation a special class with certain definite privileges. As a result the Spanish Army has succeeded in making its position both intangible and impregnable. In Spain one can freely argue against anything, even the Almighty, but the man who ventures to oppose any act of the military is at once hustled off to prison and brought up before a military tribunal, even though the offender may be a civilian.

As soon as the officers of the Army became fully conscious of their power, their arrogance swelled to such dimensions that they began

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to treat with the King more or less as an equal, and finally to give him orders. But Alfonso XIII, looking on the Army as his own creation more or less, or at least that of his family, gave in resignedly to demands which he believed were of a temporary nature. Surely he would be able to control the country much better through his soldiers than he had ever been able to do through his civilian subjects !





**ALFONSO'S ACCOMPLICE—DICTATOR**



## VII

### ALFONSO'S ACCOMPLICE, PRIMO DE RIVERA— DICTATOR

FOR four years Alfonso prepared the blow that was to suppress the constitutional régime and inaugurate the military rule of Spain. But Alfonso cannot keep a secret. With characteristic imprudence he yielded to an impulse, stimulated perhaps by the heavy Melilla wine of which he had been partaking, to make a speech at a banquet at Cordova, and, in a rambling discourse, allowed himself to voice his bitter disappointment with his rôle as a constitutional ruler, giving his hearers to understand that he intended to become absolute master of Spain.

The military juntas had the same ambition. The Moroccan disasters were directly due, they claimed, to the fact that the Cabinet consisted of civilians. Thus, King and officers

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of the Army were agreed as to where to find a scapegoat. Statesmen and politicians alike were to be offered up indiscriminately in expiation of their mistakes, for if Spain was now suffering from all kinds of ills, it was they who were to blame. But just so soon as the King and a dozen or so generals had taken over the government of Spain, then we would see an era of prosperity ushered in ! And as to the Army, why it would win a victory every twenty-four hours !

The military commanders who had thus suddenly been transformed into men of affairs planned to make General Aguilera Dictator. Unfortunately for their plans, however, the general, a more out-spoken personage than Primo de Rivera, precipitated a scene in the Senate one night by declaring that the honour of an officer is a more serious matter than the honour of a civilian. The former Prime Minister, Sanchez Guerra, an aged, irritable Conservative, replied with two resounding slaps by way of proving that a civilian's honour is as touchy at least as an officer's !

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The affair developed in due form and according to the tradition established for such occurrences. Nevertheless, the fact remained that Aguilera had been slapped twice. That settled his prospects as Dictator. What prestige was left to an officer who had received two slaps from a lawyer ?

The King thereupon bethought himself of Primo de Rivera, an officer whose rapid advance in rank had aroused the dislike of his brother-officers. He was at the time Commander-General of Catalonia.

Certainly, of all the generals in the Spanish Army, the one least fitted to lead a "moral" revolution was Primo de Rivera. I do not care to go into the private affairs of my enemies, but Rivera himself has alluded on several occasions to the life he led before becoming Dictator, almost as though he were making a public confession.

For thirty years, whenever anyone in Spain wanted to cite a flagrant instance of favouritism, of nepotism, he would refer to Miguelito, Primo de Rivera. In spite of the fact that

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Primo de Rivera has now become lieutenant-general and that he is practically the master of all Spain, he is still Miguelito, and his character has not changed a bit since the time when he was nothing but a lieutenant.

Primo de Rivera is the nephew of that General Primo de Rivera who betrayed the revolutionary Government in 1874 and restored the dynasty of the Bourbons. Having no children of his own, General Primo de Rivera centred his hopes on young Miguelito and exerted his influence to the utmost to advance the young man rapidly so that the family's heroic traditions might be upheld.

Rarely has an advance been so rapid. One can compare it only with the meteoric careers of the generals of the first Republic and of Napoleon. Wherever there was fighting, there General de Rivera's nephew was to be found, and invariably (at least according to reports) he managed to accomplish something heroic, sometimes almost before he had arrived on the scene of action! Only the great Spanish national hero, the Cid, can be

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compared with him for ubiquity and promptitude of action.

So well did his uncle plan his career for him that before Miguelito was thirty he had already, by way of Cuba and the Philippines, acquired a generalship. Yet this general at thirty had never had an army to command, and his first achievements in that direction were actually accomplished after he had become the president of the Directorate. I might add, however, that, like other Spanish generals, Primo de Rivera has also been beaten by the Arab leader, Abd-el-Krim, formerly his teacher of Arabic and the companion of his jollifications in the days when General de Rivera's nephew was a Government employee at Melilla.

Miguel Primo de Rivera is a native of the town of Xerez, which enjoys some celebrity as the home of sherry wines. Like all Southerners he is garrulous, but this need not necessarily be put down as a weakness if behind his verbosity one could discover signs of intelligence. Miguelito is unfortunately a



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kind of second cousin to Alfonso XIII in this respect at least, that he too firmly believes himself to have been endowed at birth with an intelligence competent to solve all problems. Singularly enough the solutions both Miguelito and his King arrive at bear a striking resemblance to the discoveries made by the famous Monsieur de la Palisse of the French song, who is convinced it takes a bright fellow to perceive that it is wet when it rains.

For pedantry, self-sufficiency, and sheer impudence as revealed in his speeches, he reminds me of nothing so much as the mushroom generals I knew in Mexico and some of the small South American Republics. All he needs to make him a perfect hero, according to the pattern in vogue there, is the confirmed habit of writing bad verse.

As to the manner in which the *coup d'état* was carried out, nothing could have been more simple. The Cabinet, under the normal leadership of the Marquis of Alhucemas, was very weak, and the Minister of War, Aizpuru, was ready to go over to the other side—for

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which the Directorate later rewarded him by appointing him High Commissioner of Morocco. The only Minister to be feared, Alba, was not in Madrid at the time, but with the King at San Sebastian. At the most critical moment of the *coup d'état* Alba was forced, by an attempt to assassinate him, to escape over the frontier to France.

At no time would it have been difficult for the King to put a stop to the revolutionary movement. All he would have had to do was to clap the Commander-General of Catalonia into gaol. But, as I have tried to explain, the threatened uprising in Catalonia was nothing but an excuse for foisting a Directorate on the country.

Primo de Rivera's military insurrection was entirely an officers' insurrection, both in Barcelona and Madrid. While the officers were making speeches and uttering threats in the Army's name, the soldiers were kept in barracks. No doubt the officer Soviets were afraid of letting the soldiers out into the streets. What might these men do when they

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found themselves receiving orders from officers who were themselves rebels and who had destroyed the freedom of their country? Instead of shooting at the populace they might turn on their commanders. Soviets of sergeants, corporals, and privates might very well succeed the officer Soviets.

But in spite of the lurking dangers of the situation, Primo de Rivera and the King carried out the Catalonian revolt successfully. Not only did they avoid running on the rocks, but they actually aroused enthusiasm in certain quarters.

Without committing himself to any definite promises, Primo de Rivera succeeded in conveying to the rich Catalonian supporters of separatism the impression that he was in sympathy with their ambitions, while the capitalists and manufacturers of this active region looked upon him as the champion of a social order which was being threatened by the working class!

The rulers of Spain have succeeded in making their subjects believe that all the

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ills of Spain are attributable to one cause—the Spanish politicians. If, by some chance, anything favourable occurs, it is to the King's credit alone. In the eyes of his people Alfonso is a model ruler, patient and kindly, who would spare nothing to make them happy if those rascally politicians weren't always interfering with him !

Miguelito, who resembles the mob in more than one particular, has been clever enough to find the formula most likely to arouse the mob's enthusiasm :—

“ The King is a great man, honest and spotless, as I am myself. The politicians who have ruled Spain up to this time are a gang of thieves. I am going to show them up and put them behind prison bars ! ”

And after solemnly uttering this promise, the saviour of the Spanish monarchy started out for Madrid to purify Spain. . . .



## HOW THE DICTATOR “GOVERNS”





## VIII

### HOW THE DICTATOR "GOVERNS"

**P**RIMO DE RIVERA'S first act as Dictator was to get out a manifesto urging his subjects to act as informants against one another, promising as a reward that they would not be punished for complicity. It was apparently his ambition to bring Spain back to the days of *auto da fé* and accusations without proof. The rôle of Grand Inquisitor he reserved for himself. Anyone might send him any sort of accusation against anyone else without risk. To the honour of Spain be it said, small response was made to this infamous invitation. But as he had carried out his revolution by means of the slogan "Prison bars for the political 'grafters'!" he felt it incumbent upon him to prove that his predecessors in office had been guilty of wholesale stealing. Up to the present, however—a period of sixteen months

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of complete autocracy—he has not been able to adduce any evidence upholding what he set out to prove with such a fine flourish of trumpets.

One of the chief victims of the military Directorate's persecutions is Alba, Liberal Member of the King's Cabinet at the time the Constitutional Government was abolished, who has become the *bête noir* of Primo de Rivera and his satellites. The reasons for this hatred are not far to seek. While serving in the Cabinet, Alba tried to put a tax on the profits of the concerns supplying the Army. He issued a decree to the effect that instruction in the Catholic faith was no longer obligatory in the Spanish schools, and—unprecedented insolence in Spain!—forced the religious orders to pay taxes, putting them on a par with civil institutions. Far less than that was needed to make him thoroughly abhorrent to the supporters of the Right, who were also the supporters of the Directorate. In their estimation Alba was a demagogue deserving of every form of attack and calumny.

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As to the King, he had his own reasons for detesting Alba. This particular Minister was the only one who dared oppose Alfonso when the latter determined to free himself from the trammels of the constitution. In addition, Alba had the effrontery to carry out the ransoming of the Spanish prisoners of the Rif on his own initiative, an operation which the generals would never have carried through successfully. And, final affront to the military power, just before the *coup d'état* was accomplished, Alba caused certain generals to be dismissed from office for incompetence or insubordination.

In their hour of triumph, the henchmen of the Directorate plotted Alba's assassination. Fortunately, Alba made good his escape and took refuge in France. Had he lingered in Spain, he would have lost his honour as well as his life at the hands of his enemies, for Primo de Rivera's unsparing accusations of theft would have served as his funeral oration, and perhaps gone unanswered. The Directorate brought charges against him, and Primo

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de Rivera could find no better judge to appoint in the case than his own adjutant. The Minister's papers, even those of an entirely private nature, were seized by the Military, but the most thorough search revealed no grounds for bringing charges against him. Primo de Rivera then dismissed the adjutant and appointed a civil judge in the case, the son of a servant of the Riveras. But even this judge was unable to find anything of an incriminating nature in Señor Alba's conduct, in spite of the threats to which the witnesses in the case were treated.

The other investigations instituted by the members of the Directorate petered out in the same way. Primo de Rivera's insurrection was justified, so some Spaniards believed, by the dishonesty of the men who had been driven out of office. But Primo de Rivera himself could not manufacture enough evidence to convict these men. And the insurrectionists, who vociferously proclaimed that they were leading a revolution against immorality, were shown up as being them-

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selves the source of an infinitely greater corruption than had existed before they seized the Government.

The war that ensued between the civil and the military powers in Spain was not lacking in humorous aspects, but it is hard for Spaniards to laugh at a state of affairs which reflects such discredit on the national honour. The notorious case of "The Mahogany Girl" is a very good example of the way Primo de Rivera has used the power he seized by illegal means—even though with the King's consent! "La Caoba" or "The Mahogany Girl," doubtless so-called because of her hair, was a jewellery worker who was accused of exercising undue influence over an aged theatre director in Madrid, and of keeping him in her rooms and administering cocaine. The man's family brought a complaint against the woman and the judge found sufficient grounds for sending "La Caoba" for trial. At this juncture the Dictator of all Spain, the warrior and statesman who was presumably centring all his attention on grave problems of vital import-



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ance to the nation, took a hand in the affair and ordered the judge to drop the case. The judge rose to the defence of his rights and of civil authority, and replied that justice had no orders to receive from anyone and that he would continue doing his duty. In addition, he assured the Dictator that the letter received from him would be produced in court as part of the evidence. The Dictator then ordered the head of the Supreme Court to punish the presumptuous judge. This the head of the Supreme Court refused to do, adding that he approved his subordinate's conduct entirely. Whereupon Dictator Miguelito, to satisfy certain of his friends, removed both the judge and the president of the Supreme Court from office. So much for morality !

It could scarcely come as a surprise to anyone living in Spain that the Dictator who made informing a public virtue should also violate the mails. He has not hesitated to have letters opened by his creatures, and to prosecute individuals for expressing even in

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the strictest confidence an opinion unfavourable to him or his agents.

All the world knows how my distinguished friend, Professor Unamuno, was sentenced to deportation to the Canary Islands for having communicated his impressions of the Directorate to one of his friends living in Argentine. In this case the contents of the letter were voluntarily revealed by Unamuno's correspondent, who had the letter printed in a Buenos Aires paper. A similar case is that of a former Conservative Cabinet Minister, Señor Ossorio y Gallardo, who was indiscreet enough to write to Señor Maura (also a member of the Right) the details of a disreputable affair with which the Directorate was connected. Primo de Rivera had the letter opened, and its author sent to gaol.

The mere publishing of an article in a trade journal may result in the prosecution of the author if he fails to submit his proofs to the censorship. The Marquis of Cortina was also deported to the Canaries for an article he wrote on a financial subject in which he



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pointed out some of the Directorate's mistakes in economic matters.

But Primo de Rivera has some sense of the scenic effects it is desirable to produce in order to draw a burst of applause from the crowd, and he realises that deliberately playing the rôle of a brusque, brutal conqueror is not sufficient to maintain his power. He has therefore attempted to establish an association of civilians, called the *Union Patriótica*, with the intention of appearing to hand over the power to civilians—who are nothing more, of course, than his accomplices in disguise. Meanwhile he continues to rule from behind the scenes.

Primo de Rivera is one of those men who can do anything and everything except attend to their jobs. It is his function as a soldier to make war successfully. Moreover, one of his pretexts for abolishing the constitution was the claim that he could thus carry on the war more successfully. Yet, after the *coup d'état*, the war in Africa languished, forgotten, for ten months, until the Moroccans surprised

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our troops in circumstances even more disastrous to us than the catastrophe of 1921.

Miguelito has aped Mussolini in many of his gestures. His imitation of Italy's dictator, however, is only a sorry burlesque. Mussolini made his way up from the masses, has a party behind him, and derives his strength from the masses he sprang from. But Primo de Rivera's claim to power has nothing more valid behind it than the fact that he is his uncle's nephew. Moreover, he started with what in Mussolini's case was but a link in an already long chain of events—the seizure of the Government by means of force. It was only after he had seized the power that Primo de Rivera tried to build up a party for himself by way of justification.



HOW THE DICTATOR WINS  
“ VICTORIES ” IN AFRICA



## IX

### HOW THE DICTATOR WINS "VICTORIES" IN AFRICA

**A**ND how is Primo de Rivera holding Spain? Four thousand officers have been put in charge—with triple pay—of the town councils. Through these petty administrators, who have inaugurated a kind of reign of terror for their subordinates, Primo de Rivera has succeeded in establishing the first units of his Patriots' Union.

The most impressive page of Primo de Rivera's political life up to this point is the "Italian journey" he took with his protégé, Alfonso XIII, when the ruler in epaulettes found himself banqueting face to face with the dictator in white spats.

But let me in passing, pay this tribute at least to the former Italian workman, that he never allows his Napoleonic figure to be seen

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except in some majestic pose. Incidentally, it must have brought more than one grimace to his imperial features to be treated by the self-styled "Spanish Mussolini" as a colleague and fellow-dictator.

Alfonso gave proofs of particular indiscretion on this visit, during which he delivered his famous speech at the Vatican. It should be noted, however, that the composition he read to the Pope was not his own but that of Father Torres, a famous Jesuit living in Madrid, and that it was worthy of its author. So uncompromising was it in tone, so intolerant and reactionary in spirit, that even the Pope was alarmed by it.

Finally, with a lack of tact rarely equalled, Alfonso reminded the Pope that Spain had always fought against the Mussulmans, and added that he would continue to lend his support to a struggle destined to implant the Cross in Africa and impose Christianity upon the faithful followers of Mahomet. For years, Spain's representatives in Morocco have been trying to overcome the hostility of the Rif



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by means of propaganda, and an essential part of this propaganda is, of course, the assurance that the Spanish would respect the religious faith of the Mohammedans as scrupulously as England, France, and other countries respect the religious faith of their colonies and dependencies. In the few minutes that it took him to read the Jesuit's speech, Alfonso destroyed the work of years and all prospect of peace in Africa.

Naturally, Abd-el-Krim, who is a kind of Spaniard disguised as an Arab—he has spent most of his life at Melilla in the service of Spain—was not likely to allow an incident so favourable to his ambitions to pass unutilised. He had Father Torres' words translated into Arabic and circulated among all the Moroccan tribes over which Spain has tried to establish her protectorate. In a few weeks he won more supporters to his cause than he could have done by an expenditure of millions of money. Alfonso's speech at the Vatican may be said to have given new life to Arab ambitions. The African war at once

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took on a frankly religious aspect and spread to the western regions of Morocco, which until then had been at peace. And thus thousands of Spaniards owe their deaths to the combined eloquence of Alfonso XIII and Father Torres.

But the King had not yet done with his speeches. At Valencia he was present at a banquet at which he was inspired to declare that practically all the men who had helped him to govern Spain were either dishonest or incompetent, and that, if the Directorate had not driven them out of office, he would have been obliged to do it himself. The speech was so outrageous, coming as it did from the mouth of a presumably responsible adult, that the members of the Directorate who had remained at Madrid forbade its publication in the newspapers.

To-day, when Alfonso XIII is virtually the Directorate's prisoner, he may well think with regret of the civilian Ministers who served him in other days, not always without remonstrance, but with exemplary obedience

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for the most part. Things have gone quite otherwise with the men of the Directorate. However, Alfonso may yet find a way of getting rid of his present masters.

As to the regeneration of Spanish civil life, promised by the men who seized the Government, all that has been done in that direction consists of suspending a few Government employees who were caught coming into their offices late, and fining a few clerks who were found guilty of petty "grafting" or of the negligence always present in fossilised bureaucracies. A few of these unhappy individuals, terrified by the military despotism let loose on them, committed suicide rather than face it.

"They promised us the blood of our 'grafters,' and they toss us the bones of a few wretched clerks," comments the Spanish people.

As to the morale of the Army, never has that body been so rotted to the core with "graft." The investigations into the wholesale robbery going on in Morocco have had

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to be quashed, for they lead directly to the doors of the men supporting the Directorate. That does not mean that every man in the Spanish Army is a thief, without semblance of honour. It means that the thieves are in control.

As to the conduct of the war in Morocco, the chief pretext for the establishment of the Directorate, never have the military operations there been so fatally ineffective. The civilian Ministry was represented as being the chief cause of the Spanish defeats in Africa, as the readers of these chapters will remember. The Directorate has no such obstacle to contend with and should sweep all before it. It has been lavish with the man-power of Spain, and with the nation's money, yet never has the defeat of Spanish arms on the continent been so overwhelming. In the first place, the generals who turned into statesmen overnight waited ten months without apparently giving a thought to the Army. During this interval the troops made no attempt to advance, but merely held their positions as they

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had been doing under the constitutional Government. They moved out of their positions only when Abd-el-Krim, who is the real master of the situation, attacked them and put them to rout. But nothing of all this prevented Primo de Rivera from touring Spain as a conqueror.

It may be supposed that Primo de Rivera, before ordering the troops to advance, was waiting for an occasion which would have put his conduct of the war in a shining light. But no one better than he should have known that Abd-el-Krim, his former boon companion, was not the man to lose an opportunity. The Arab leader was all this time industriously carrying the firebrands of war to all the tribes, and stirring up even those most peacefully inclined.

But negligence was not enough. Primo de Rivera had to make a speech, too. The combined after-dinner speeches of the Spanish Dictator and the King have been more fatal to Spain than the weapons of her enemy. Miguelito could find no better subject to discuss over the wine-cups of a banquet at



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Malaga than the strategy he expected to pursue in Morocco. He planned, so he artlessly confided to his hearers, to abandon a large part of the territory occupied in Africa, and to fall back on the towns formerly held by Spanish troops. His speech was printed in full by the papers the next day.

Small wonder that General Lyautey, who knows the Moroccan situation thoroughly, raised both hands to his head, aghast at such a stupendous indiscretion.

“An army retreats when it must, but it does not announce it to the enemy in advance!” he exclaimed.

Abd-el-Krim knew what use to make of the information; he had the speech translated into Arabic and circulated among all the tribes of the western part of Morocco. The effect was immediate. The Arabs who had been friendly to Spain, or who were merely neutral, at once rose to arms, and attacked our troops. Naturally enough, they were fearful of being left alone to face the victorious Abd-el-Krim as he advanced, and they fought to win back the

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friendship of the Arab leader, and save their skins. Such were the fruits of our Dictator's moment of expansiveness.

The disaster in Western Morocco surpassed even that of Annural. Seventeen thousand Spanish soldiers perished or were lost. There are at this very moment more than a thousand Spanish prisoners in Abd-el-Krim's hands. In addition, a large number of cannon and quantities of ammunition were captured by the Arabs.

Incidentally, most of the Arabs of Western Morocco were armed with rifles that had been turned over to them with customary foresight by the Spanish generals. No wonder Abd-el-Krim smiled when he heard that certain supporters of the Directorate were saying that the English were supplying the Arabs of the Rif with ammunition.

"I don't need to buy rifles from any nation in Europe. The Spanish generals furnish me with all I need!" was his comment.

Abd-el-Krim might even have said that Primo de Rivera and his colleagues provided



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him with more weapons than he could use !

To cap this disgrace, it was found that the Spanish Army of a hundred thousand men had been routed by five thousand Arabs.

Yet, in that swift campaign from eastern to western Morocco, the Arabs encountered here and there a resistance nothing less than heroic. A good many Spanish strongholds gave in only when the Spanish Dictator telegraphed them to surrender. In one instance, the officer in command, knowing what it means to be taken prisoner by the Rif Arabs, shot all his wounded men and then killed himself. The letter he wrote to the Dictator before firing his last bullet is only one of the thousands of documents incriminating Primo de Rivera.

And what is the record of the Directorate as regards Spain's social unrest ? People who are content to judge by appearances point out that since the *coup d'état* the " class-war murders " in Barcelona and other Spanish cities, have ceased. That is true, but it is due entirely to the fact that Spain is in a state of

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siege. It was equally true when the civil Government declared a state of siege. But that is an abnormal state and cannot be indefinitely prolonged, any more than a human organism can be kept continuously under anæsthetics. Sooner or later more normal conditions will have to be resumed, and then a new outbreak of murders will certainly occur, for the Directorate has not removed the cause of such crimes. On the contrary it has multiplied them. Only a complete change in social conditions can prevent a recurrence of this frightful symptom of Spain's malady.

And what a state our country is in, thanks to her King's attempt to centre the power in the hands of men he expected to control! The despotic acts of the Military Government have spread abroad a sense of insecurity and fear. People hesitate to travel, many hotels are empty, and trade is extraordinarily bad as a result of the general paralysis. Thanks to the Directorate's ministrations the peseta is steadily losing in value, while the cost

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of living is steadily rising. As the common necessities of life daily grow more expensive, more and more of our people are finding themselves face to face with starvation. If the Directorate continues in power for another year, the nation will probably be bankrupt and the catastrophe complete.

The "reform" Government, had the Directorate been in reality anything of the sort, could easily enough have inaugurated certain changes for the better, inasmuch as it could have overcome the traditional resistance encountered by the Liberal Ministries when they attempted to put through any progressive measure. The Directorate, however, has simply given new life to old abuses by its sanction of them, and suppressed the few reforms previously brought about by the Liberals. For instance, it has relieved all religious institutions of paying taxes. However, it forbade the newspapers to mention this reactionary measure.

The "economies" vaunted by the Directorate do not bear close inspection any more

## HOW THE DICTATOR WINS VICTORIES

than the rest of their activities, real or pretended. A few clerks' positions have been suppressed, while fat sinecures have been provided for the generals. Primo de Rivera did not forget to increase his own emoluments and has awarded himself a salary of fifty thousand pesetas for his services as representative of the nation. No Prime Minister of Spain ever ventured to rate himself so high !

During one year of Directorate rule, Spain's floating debt increased by approximately a thousand million pesetas.

To keep the country well in hand, however, the Directorate has scattered salaries and bonuses far and wide, to an extent unknown even in Spain. The four thousand military assigned to each municipality, who are endeavouring to introduce the discipline of the barracks into the municipal councils, treating the mayors as though they were raw recruits, and quite generally giving their orders lash in hand, receive no less than three separate salaries, their officer's pay, a salary from the Government, and a supplementary salary

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assigned to them by the terrorised municipalities. In addition, their respective councils are required to furnish lodgings for these officers and their families.

Of course, these Commissaries of the Military Terror are protégés of Primo de Rivera and form the nucleus of his admirers and partisans. When the Dictator takes a trip through the provinces, these be-spurred and be-sabred delegates of his go out to meet him at the head of the municipal councils, forcing the latter to greet the Dictator with cheers for “the saviour of Spain!” It is from the councils thus controlled that the falsified statistics emanate, designed to prove that Spain is making great strides toward progress and that her resources are multiplying in unprecedented fashion.

THE KING MUST GO!





## X

### THE KING MUST GO !

**T**HE Spanish Directorate is a menace to the entire world. The modern democracies who are to-day the leaders of humanity cannot afford to be indifferent to the present Spanish Government. That Government is not merely a picturesque anachronism. It is a dangerous anachronism.

The republics of Latin America have already felt the influence of this illegal and absurd régime. Since the Directorate came into power, the presidents of certain South American republics have found in the newly-installed military despotism of the "mother country" all the justification they require to palliate their own autocratic acts. Quite recently we witnessed a militarist régime in "the Spanish style" being established in one of these republics, in spite of its long tradition of civil Government.

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

In the speech Alfonso addressed to the Pope he made it clear that he recognised as Spaniards none but Catholics. Subjects of Spain professing any other religious faith than Catholicism simply do not count for Alfonso. Protestants and free-thinkers doubtless are scarcely considered to have the right to live. Meanwhile the Jesuits are regaining possession of Spain, thanks to the Directorate's encouragement. Alfonso XIII, during his sojourn in Rome, invited the general of the order to visit what he was pleased to call "my nation."

I believe that this visit, which is now taking place, is the first ever paid to Spain by a Jesuit general since the days of St. Ignatius de Loyola. The present representative of the order has been received in Spain with all sorts of pomp and ceremonies. This "black monarch" may well, in his innermost thoughts, look upon himself as the coming sovereign of the Spanish nation.

Alfonso XIII gave the Jesuits additional encouragement by delivering another of his

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famous speeches at the Jesuit University of Deusto, and they are now utilising the somewhat vague protection emanating from the Directorate to persuade Miguelito to give them control of the religious teaching in the universities, a sure means of exercising their occult influence over the whole country. To be a Protestant or merely to be a non-Catholic is in Spain considered a disgrace which must be carefully concealed. Non-Catholic churches are not allowed to reveal their existence by any outward signs visible from the street, but are relegated to the interior of buildings and as carefully hidden from the public as though they were a menace to the life and morals of the community.

Both the Directorate, should it maintain its power, and Alfonso XIII, should he remain on the throne, are dangerous to the world's peace. Alfonso is a friend of the Krupp firm. He is also a stockholder in the Trans-Mediterranean Navigation Company, in which he holds a large number of shares. The Trans-Mediterranean, be it noted, has been awarded

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

the contract to transport troops and munitions to Morocco. So long as the war lasts, therefore, this company is sure of its profits, and the King of his dividends.

The Trans-Mediterranean used to own some large shipyards in the port of Valencia. It sold them a few months ago to the Krupps, not without a great deal of opposition on the part of the shareholders of liberal tendency who were distinctly not in favour of the transaction. The King, however, wished the sale to go through, and go through it did. Besides this purchase, the Krupps have just acquired some large iron foundries in Barcelona and are on the point of gaining control of similar properties at Tarragona, where they intend to instal their factories—all with the approval and support of Alfonso. One need only glance at a map of the Spanish Mediterranean coast to see that the Krupp installations in Barcelona, Tarragona, and Valencia are only the first units of a series which will ultimately include Malaga, and Algeciras, facing Gibraltar.

Meanwhile Zeppelin works are about to be

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set up in Seville. Under pretext of establishing an air service between Spain and South America, the Germans have found a way to set up their factories for the construction of dirigibles in the very heart of Spain.

And thus under the heavy hand of tyranny, Spain is daily being dragged farther along the road of disloyalty toward those nations with which she has the closest affinity. Such an attempt to violate her nature is a crime against Spain's very soul. It cannot be tolerated. A situation so equivocal and shameful must be brought to an end. The cause of Spain's present sorry state, the individual who is the corrupting influence destroying her physically and morally, must be eliminated from the factors controlling our country's destiny !

Alfonso XIII must leave Spain ! It may be that the reason why the King and some of his generals are so avidly amassing fortunes is that they are secretly aware of their defeat and are thinking now only of providing themselves with incomes for a forthcoming exile.

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At any rate, Spain is being looted as never before in her history. Perfectly unbelievable concessions have been awarded certain railway companies. A telephone monopoly has been granted to one company quite arbitrarily, before competing bids could be sent in. It is needless to go into the details showing how skilfully the graft in this transaction was distributed. Monopolies flourish on every hand. There is even a monopoly of theatre, film, and bull-fight tickets. The person who carried off this prize is paying for it to the tune of a million pesetas annually, but those who sold him the "privilege" receive more than that in return—unofficially, of course!

Primo de Rivera has seen fit to suppress gambling of late. But it is not difficult to divine why. This is merely the first step towards making gambling, too, a monopoly throughout Spain and selling it to some enterprise which, officially, will contribute a certain percentage of its perquisites to charity, and—unofficially—will pay a far more impressive amount to the individuals who organised the



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“trust.” The public is already speculating as to who will carry off this plum. Will it be the ubiquitous Monsieur Marquet, or a certain French concern, or the Levantine multi-millionaire who has large interests in the Monte Carlo Company ?

Like common thieves on the point of leaving a house they have rifled, members of the Directorate seem intent on carrying off even the nails on the wall. They are sparing nothing, exploiting everything, and taking every advantage of a situation made expressly for their purposes, since there is now no Parliament to criticise the Government, and the Press is bound and gagged.

The agents of these looters are going up and down through England, the United States, and France, trying to sell to capitalists—for a handsome commission of course—monopolies which they claim to control. I myself have been able to nip several of these transactions in the bud, and I take this present occasion to say to the capitalists of these several countries in warning :—



## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

“ Don’t have any dealings with the Directorate nor with King Alfonso, for on the day when Spain reinaugurates a legitimate Government and wins back the rights of which she is now deprived, she will submit the business transactions of the Directorate to strict scrutiny, and it is not likely that any of these ‘ deals ’ will be recognised as valid, because most of them are dishonest.”

The monarchy has succeeded in paralysing with its poisons the hardy, virile nature of the Spanish, and is now banking on the indecision and fear of the Conservative classes. “ If the King goes, what will happen ? ” they ask.

Well, whatever happens, it will not be so terrible as the war in Morocco. And Spain has this to gain by losing her King : She will eventually win the esteem of the great civilised nations of the world, and that is something she very much needs to do !

Eighteen Kings disappeared from Europe during the World War. But their nations did not die. Alfonso would merely be the twentieth monarch to step down from his

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throne, and Spain can only benefit from his exit.

The war in Africa costs us five million pesetas a day. But Spain is a poor country and she cannot continue to pour out her capital at an utter loss. It is true that the World War brought her twelve thousand millions, but this money has been squandered in foolish speculations, and in carrying on the futile operations in Morocco.

The war in Africa is not a war in defence of our national territory, nor of our national honour. It is a war got up, in the first place, because Alfonso wanted to play Kaiser, and thought the youth of Spain were his own little tin soldiers that he could take out of the box when he felt like lining them up and strutting up and down before them. In the second place, it is a war carefully nursed by certain interests, those I have mentioned, for instance, and those of the Army officers themselves who must win their promotions even though Spain be destroyed in the process. And then there are the fanatics who talk of the Cross and the

## ALFONSO XIII UNMASKED

Crescent, and Crusades against the Moors, just as though we were still in the Middle Ages !

But there are in the Spanish Army men who are really honest, and who really have the interests of their country at heart. Such men as these curse this useless, costly war, which is the King's private war, and not the nation's. And there are in Spain a great many women in mourning for the twenty thousand Spanish soldiers—one quarter of the fighting force in Africa !—who have perished since the war began, fourteen years ago. This caprice of our adolescent Alfonso has lasted too long, just as his adolescence has lasted too long.

“ But, what would happen if the King went away ? ” bleats the foolish and timid flock.

Well, this would happen ! All Spaniards who have the heart and the will to give new life to our country would unite and work to the end that this poor Spain of ours, that fell into a death-like sleep years ago, should live again ! That is a work in which we all may share, those of us who toil with our

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hands and those of us who toil with our brain, those of us whose weapons are unspotted and who are willing to pour out our blood if need be, not for a dynasty, nor a class, but for our nation ! In a word, all the Spaniards who love Spain, and want to see her the mistress of her destiny !

After a half-century of silence, let the will of the nation be proclaimed at last ! And with it, may these miserable strutting wearers of uniforms vanish from the face of the land !

The failure of the Bourbon monarchy is complete. The Directorate, its latest invention, is also a fiasco, doomed to perish with the monarchy which created it.

Alfonso XIII is to-day the virtual prisoner of Primo de Rivera, once his accomplice. The Dictator is well aware of his sovereign's nature ; he has followed his twistings and turnings, and none better than he has proof of Alfonso's taste for intrigue and conspiracy. He knows that the King is endeavouring to find the means of driving him out, and he is at no great pains to conceal what he thinks of

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his monarch's manœuvres. However, out of a strong feeling of respect for individual privacy, even that of Kings, I will refrain from repeating the damaging accusations Primo de Rivera makes against Alfonso.

A great change, however, has come about in the King's habits. He now avoids appearing in public with as much care as he formerly sought it. For weeks at a time he remains shut up in the royal domains, but even so he does not succeed in allaying the Dictator's suspicions.

Two officers appointed by Primo de Rivera keep close watch on Alfonso; they follow him whenever he goes out, and are in constant attendance in the King's ante-chamber at the palace. The Directorate's censors do not spare the royal correspondence, for they carefully scan all communications addressed to Alfonso. Primo de Rivera knows his royal master's tricks! Didn't he carry on a little intrigue with him in the days when the *coup d'état* was being prepared? And might not Alfonso now be trying to work

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up another *coup d'état*, but this time *against* the Directorate ?

As to the presumable supporters of the monarchy, the Spanish generals, they are divided, it seems, into rival coteries animated by feelings of the liveliest hostility one against the other. Thanks to this development of the Spanish military character—due entirely to the theatrical rôle to which Alfonso has reduced his officers—these generals bear a noticeable resemblance to the Mexican generals of the Pancho Villa period. To the credit of the Mexican generals be it said, however, that when they are engaged in a feud, they fight it out, and calmly proceed to shoot one another down. But the Obregons of Spain are a timid lot, and fight, not with bullets, but with intrigues and gossip. Primo de Rivera, for instance, got rid of his rival Cavalcanti, not by means of an honest knife-thrust, but by packing him off to study the army systems of the Balkans !

The peaceable reconstruction of Spain under some modern form of government favourable



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to progress would not be so difficult—once we could get rid of the King! What Greece has just done we can do. A provisional government made up of the elements which escaped being contaminated by the present régime can take charge of restoring the constitution, and bringing back our civil rights.

Two or three years' honest study of our problems would prepare us for carrying out a national plebiscite through which Spain could express her desires as to the form of government she wished to have. If the vote cast should be in favour of continuing the monarchy, that institution could be revised and rejuvenated.

Should the nation, however, vote for a republic, we shall see to it that the republic we set up is really representative of the aspirations of the Spanish people, contradictory though they may appear. Separatism, I am fairly convinced, is a disease of the monarchy. Catalonian restiveness has long been the excuse for the arbitrary acts of the Government. But no part of Spain, more than Catalonia, has



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been humiliated by the Directorate. Primo de Rivera knew well enough how to throw the brunt of his uprising on the Catalan middle class. But from the very first hour of his success he treated this instrument of his triumph with a cynical brutality past all belief. The Catalan festivities, in the course of which Primo de Rivera's cavalry charged the crowd, cutting it down with sabres, were festivities that Primo de Rivera himself had authorised. But having used Catalan disaffection for his own purposes, the Dictator was determined to terrorise the province. His treachery has all but made the breach between this part of Spain and the rest too wide and too deep ever to fill.

But a republic should mean peace, and order, and education, and respect for liberty and freedom of thought ; it should mean an army that is really a national army, in the service of law and order, an army of soldiers who know their duty, an army purged of adventurers and "grafters."

In such a state the opposing camps of

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political opinion could carry on their contests in a spirit of courteous tolerance instead of fighting one another in a relentless war, as they are doing to-day, exasperated and enraged by the sufferings they have endured and the crimes committed against them. Our Spanish working-class, now as brutally hounded as though it were a wild beast, will show that it is no different from the working-class of any other country, once its rights are recognised, once a régime of order and decency and equality in the eyes of the law is established. The well-to-do classes will no longer have to pour their money into a ridiculous war, and will no longer have to maintain themselves by playing into the hands of the political "grafters" who are exploiting the nation's resources. Capital and Labour will work together as in other civilised countries, neither one perhaps finding a remedy for their old antagonism, but at least carrying on their contests without resorting to the crimes of blood that have marked their struggles under the monarchy in Spain. The various

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provincial units of our country will no longer have to expend a large part of their energies in advancing their claims to autonomy, but, within the elastic limits of a federal republic similar to the Swiss republic or that of the United States, will be able to satisfy their aspirations to independence. And, finally, under a republican form of government, presupposing as it does a literate electorate, the Spanish educational system will at last receive the attention and the financial support for lack of which it is now languishing. In no nation of Europe is the shortage of schools so marked as in Spain. According to the most conservative estimates we need at least sixty thousand new schools in order to bring our country up to the level of other European nations in mere respect of numbers. But we need not only more schools, we need better schools. Needless to say, the Directorate has not given even a moment's attention to Spain's educational problem.

But—I cannot repeat it too often—such a transformation as I have described is possible

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only provided the King leaves Spain. So long as he remains on Spanish soil it is sheer nonsense to talk of provisional governments and plebiscites.

Alfonso XIII is a schemer. Nothing politically that he touches escapes contamination.

But, lest I do him injustice, let him be brought to trial when Spain has resumed her normal existence! Yes, let him be brought to trial—not I alone, but the bones of twenty thousand Spaniards bleaching under the African sun, demand it!

When kings are brought face to face with their accusers they sometimes come to a tragic end, as England once proved to the world, and as France proved once again. Wise are the kings who profit by that lesson, and escape while there is yet time!

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